(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of reply to (c) above.

(e) The tender is due on 17.6.97. The eligibility of this tender is same as indicated in answer to (a) above. All manufacturers/suppliers including that of C-DOT can participate.

(f) Does not arise in view of reply to (e) above.

Allocation of Slot to Ernet on INSAT-2C Satellite

4120. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the INSAT-2B has been decommissioned;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that VSNL which allocates slots on the satellites has restricted slots on INSAT-2C only to commercial networks;

(c) if so, whether R&D and S&T institutional network ERNET has been allocated slots on the old INSAT-2A adversely affecting the quality of transmission; and

(d) if so, whether ERNET will be allocated slot on INSAT-2C at non commercial rates?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The Space segment of INSAT System is being controlled by Deptt. of Telecom/Deptt. of Space and not by VSNL.

(c) ERNET was earlier operational on transponder no. B in INSAT-2B Satellite. It was shifted to INSAT-2A Satellite alongwith the other users due to failure of transponder 8 of INSAT-2B Satellite. ERNET now on INSAT-2A is working satisfactorily without any complaint.

(d) There is no capacity available on INSAT-2C for operation of ERNET in C-Band.

Action taken on Athreya Committee

4121. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been submitted the Athreya Committee Report on restructuring of MTNL and DoT in the Ministry of Communications;

(b) the main recommendations of the said report;

(c) whether Government have considered the report and have taken any action thereon; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The majority of Members of the Athreya Committee recommended conversion of the field operations of the Department of Telecommunications (including MTNL) into a Holding Company and the setting up of five subsidiary Corporations viz. four Zonal Telecom Operating Corporations and one Long Distance Connector Corporation.

The report was duly considered the recommendations in respect of Corporatization were not pursued in view of the financial implications involved and reservations expressed by Telecom Staff as also in the context of the National Telecom Policy. 1994, envisaging duopoly in basic telecom services which would be provided by a Government and private operator in each circle.

Deployment of Expensive Switching Equipments

4122. SHRI G. PRATHAPA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the expensive MNC switching equipments are deployed in more than 60 cities in India;

(b) if so, the details of such equipments deployed during the last five years and plans of DoT for the next five years; and

(c) when C-DOT technology is meeting the requirements of the country, the reasons for considering MNC technology?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) Extra large size switches having busy hour calling capability of 8,00.000 BH CA (Busy Hour Call Attempt) based on MNC technology produced by registered Indian manufacturers and PSUs are deployed in different cities. List of such exchanges deployed during the last five years is given in the Annexure [See Appendix 180, Annexure No 85]. Plans to deploy these switches are drawn annually. Plan for 1997-98 has not yet been finalised.

(c) The Deptt. of Telecom decided during 1991 to introduce these extra large size switches in order to meet the growing demand and also to introduce advanced facilities like Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN), Intelligent Network (IN), CCS No. 7 Signalling etc. as that time C-DOT switches having such capability were not available.

Recently, i.e. in November 1996, C-DOT MAX-XL technology has been approved by DOT for 3,00,000 BHCA. C-DOT switches still do not support advance features such as ISDN, IN etc. Large scale production of these switches has also not commenced.

Works handled by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

4123. SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that with the seting up of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India the work in the Ministry has decreased allowing it to look more into the policy-making and operational aspects; and

(b) if so, the details of the works to be handled by the Ministry and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India separately?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) In pursuance of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Ordinance (No. 11 of 1997) promulgate on 25th January, 1997, the Central Government set up the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) with effect from 20th February, 1997 to provide a level playing field for fair competition and to engender further confidence in investors. Subsequently, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Ordinance, 1997 was replaced by an Act of Parliament. The powers and functions of the Authority are expected to enable it to effectively perform the role of watch-dog for the Telecom Sector.

2. In the context of the National Telecom Policy, 1994 whose objectives *inter alia*, include, achieving universal service, raising the quality of telecom services to world standards, providing a wide range of services to meet customers demands at reasonable prices, providing for participation of companies registered in India in basic and value-added services, making arrangements for protection and promotion of consumers' interests and ensuring fair competition, it was felt that separation of regulatory from service-providing functions was called for. The functions assigned to the TRAI include following:

(a) recommend the need and timing of introduction of a new service providers;

(b) recommend the terms and conditions of licence to a service providers;

(c) ensure technical compatibility and effective inter-connection between different services providers;

(d) regulate arrangements of sharing